



2016 EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS SERVICES SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
NOVEMBER 2016

data-driven performance ▪ strategic governance ▪ government transparency ▪ culture of accountability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

- Survey conducted btw. July 25 – Sep 1 in 2016
- 765 businesses responded across 14 industries
- Questions on:

Why located in
the County

Ease of
opening a
business

Interactions
with County
government

Regulatory
environment

Areas for
improvement

Business
characteristics

TOP 3 REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE COUNTY

Most frequently cited reasons include:

“My community”
(73%)

Access to large,
affluent customer
base (69%) and DC
(58%)

Quality of life (65%)

- “Proximity to DC” rated high by Professional Services (71%)
- “Access to talent” rated high by Health (62%) + NGOs (59%)

MOST COMMON AREAS OF FEEDBACK

1. Improve service
delivery and culture of
customer service—be
more responsive and
solutions-oriented

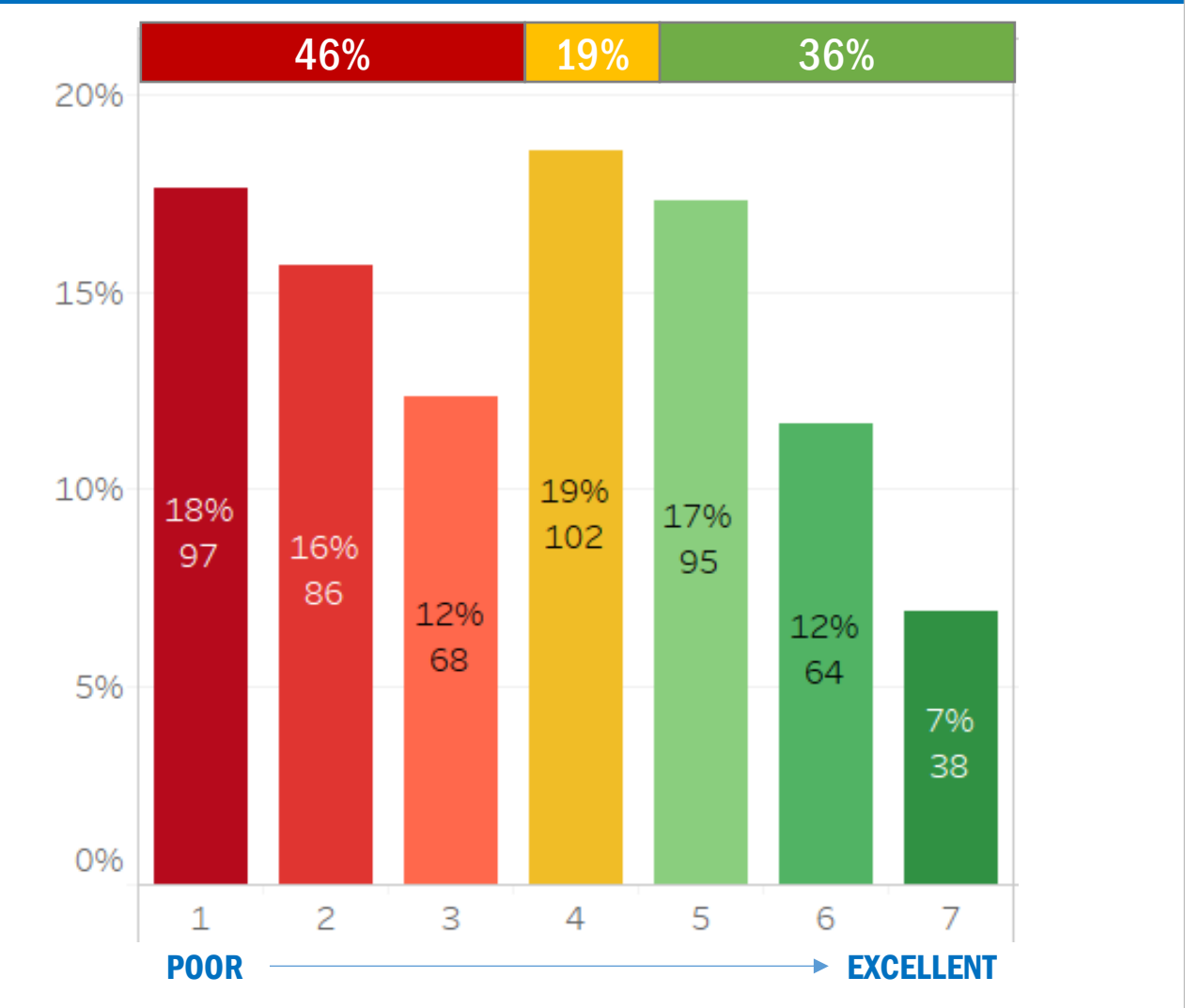
2. Provide better
guidance /
information and more
online services—incl.
by digitizing any and
all forms

3. Streamline business
interactions and
improve coordination—
reduce touchpoints,
speed up, and improve
predictability

4. County has gone too
far, too fast in
regulating business
practices—creating
uncertainty and heavy
burden

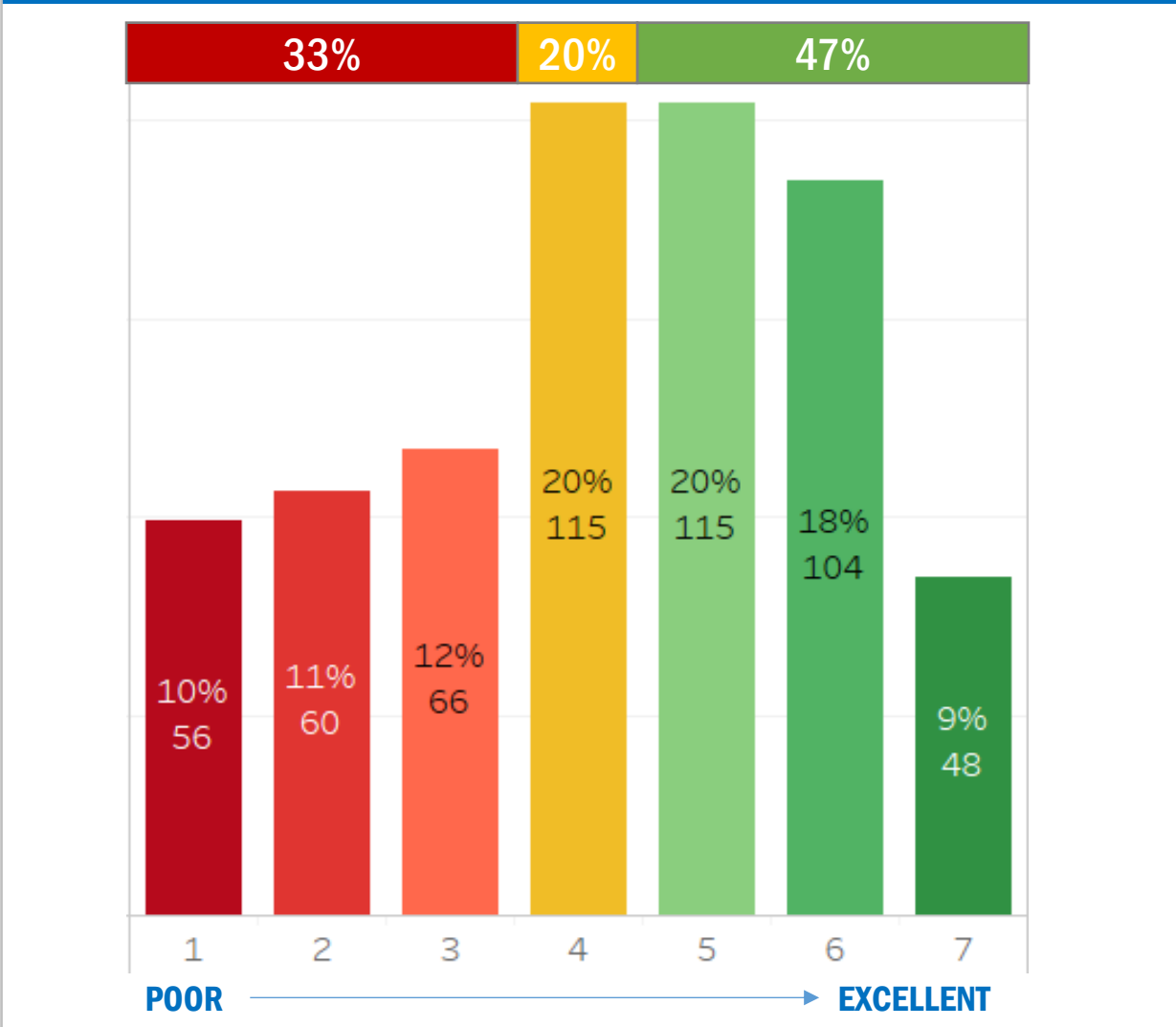
- Much of the open-ended feedback speaks to volume of new regulation
- Little distinction made btw. experience with County vs. state, cities, utilities

BUSINESS FRIENDLINESS OF REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT



Note that ratings for business friendliness had a very high correlation with the ratings for customer service.

BUSINESS INTERACTIONS WITH GOVERNMENT



Note that nearly half of respondents (47%) report that they do not frequently interact with County government.

IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY + CUSTOMER SERVICE

Improve responsiveness; follow-up more	Too many silos	Hard to reach the “right” person
Customer service training and clear standards of performance	Less antagonistic	Greater sense of urgency and culture of “yes”
Be more understanding of small businesses	Be more reasonable, flexible, open-minded	

RESPONSE

Short-term: Meet with individual departments to review specific survey feedback and identify opportunities for improvement.

Long-term: Create a culture of excellence in customer service—engage organizational change consultant to develop strategy

STREAMLINE PROCESS

Need fewer touchpoints, faster process	Procedures are too complex (even if staff is good)	Empower staff to take action
Embed more accountability	Streamline overlapping responsibilities	Need a “We are in this together” mentality
Unpredictable and inconsistent processes (cost, time, etc.)	Single point of contact	Clear and consistent interpretation of regulations

RESPONSE

Short-term: Meet with individual departments to review specific survey feedback and identify opportunities for improvement.

Long-term: Build on training program being piloted by CountyStat that uses “Lean” practices to empower frontline staff to identify and implement improvements from the bottom up.

MORE INFO / GUIDANCE + ONLINE SERVICES

“How to” guidance + checklists	Help businesses navigate government	“One stop shop”, ideally online
Easier to understand process / reqs	Less scattered information / fewer clicks	More info on business opportunities
Proactive communication (ex: notifications)	Easier, less complex forms	Easier to file complaints

RESPONSE

Short-term: (1) Develop Montgomery County Business Portal to improve access to information—and (2) work with OMB, DTS, and FIN to convert forms to a digital format that can be completed online, with payment processing.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Fast pace of new legislation creates uncertainty	Higher standards than state/ region threaten competitiveness	Zoning and building codes are too onerous and inflexible
Preference for DLC privatization	Excessive and overly complex permitting requirements	Engage businesses more when making regulation
Act like partner, not adversary	Don’t treat like “ATMs”	Too difficult / burdensome to do business with MCG

RESPONSE

Short-term: With PRO and FIN, review small purchase procurement policies and processes to ensure local businesses are fully utilized.

Long-term: (1) Develop a 2-way communication strategy that engages and informs businesses about regulatory changes (2) Conduct a comprehensive review of Fees for fairness and transparency.